

Bird Migration

Scientists have uncovered many reasons why birds migrate from one place to another. One important reason is the availability of food. Birds move from areas of low or decreasing resources to areas of high or increasing resources when they migrate in the fall. As winter in northern areas draws near, the availability of insects and other food resources drops, triggering the birds to head south.

[Missouri State Parks](#) are prime places for experiencing bird migration, but did you know that neighborhood parks, urban parks and even your own back yard are great places to see birds, too? A fun activity you can do after visiting a park is to make a travel brochure that shows your park as a “travel destination” for the flocks of birds you might see on your visit. After you read the article, [Missouri is a Hot Spot for Cold Weather Birding](#), think about some of the things Missouri has to offer that attracts these flocks. Research how travel agencies market their travel destinations. Be creative! Don’t forget that no matter what the temperature or season, it is always fun to get outside and enjoy our natural resources.

Birding Ideas for Educators or Anyone Interested in Birds

- Some birds build beautifully detailed nests. Take your class outside and gather some items that a bird might use to build a nest: sticks, mud, bark, and dried grass. Next, ask your students to try to build a nest using the things they gathered outside. However, first you need to tape their thumbs to their hand! Why? Because birds do not have opposable thumbs like humans, making it a harder job than you might expect. This serves to “even the playing field” for nest construction.
- Line your room, halls and cafeteria with posters and student artwork illustrating the beauty of birds and the importance of birds to people.
- Missouri State Parks invites you to explore the world of nature our state has to offer. Read [State Park Stories](#) about eagles and find an Eagle Watch near you.
- Let your students create and hang a “bird buffet” made of pine cones stuffed with black oil sunflower seeds mixed with peanut butter.
- The [Audubon Society of Missouri](#) supports birder education and has excellent tips for beginning birders.
- Let your students make a bulletin board with the title Migration Sensation. Attach pictures of birds, stories, articles and poetry about birds. Keep a running list of birds which have been identified on the school grounds attached to your bulletin board. Get everyone involved!
- Make your own campus field guide of the birds which have been identified at your school. Use the [Missouri Department of Conservation Field Guide](#) to identify the birds you see.

Additional Resources:

- Are you interested in other animals that migrate, for example, monarch butterflies? If so, the [USDA Forest Service](#) may have a citizen science project for you.
- More information about bird migration can be found in this [Audubon Magazine](#) article.